

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A system for providing a user interface with search query

broadening, comprising:

an input module accepting a query defining a search executable on potentially retrievable information and parsing the query;

a query broadening module providing a broadened query, wherein an operator is provided with at least one broadening search characteristic of the query to request query broadening; and

a presentation module presenting at least one of the broadened query or ~~and~~ results of a search executed on the broadened query.

2. (Original) A system according to Claim 1, wherein providing the broadened query comprises determining a meaning for at least a portion of the query.

3. (Original) A system according to Claim 2, wherein providing the broadened query comprises determining a related concept based on the meaning.

4. (Original) A system according to Claim 1, further comprising:

an evaluation module providing at least one broadened search characteristic to the broadened query.

5. (Original) A system according to Claim 1, further comprising:
an evaluation module performing at least one of modifying, replacing, supplementing, removing, or restating the at least one search characteristic.
6. (Original) A system according to Claim 1, further comprising:
a selection module selecting at least one broadening search characteristic from a set of words having a synonymous, alternate spelling, common root, or similar semantic meaning.
7. (Original) A system according to Claim 1, further comprising:
a selection module selecting at least one broadening search characteristic from a set of words having a related conceptual meaning.
8. (Canceled)
9. (Currently amended) A system according to Claim 1 [[8]], further comprising:
a delimiter provided with the operator to signal ordinary meaning with respect to the operator.
- 10-13. (Canceled)
14. (Original) A system according to Claim 1, wherein the presentation module presents at least one search characteristic in the broadened query as at least one of a static list, a menu of

selectable search characteristics, a set of checkboxes, and a list of selectable search characteristics.

15. (Original) A system according to Claim 1, wherein the presentation module presents an option triggering selection of each such search characteristic in the broadened query.

16. (Original) A system according to Claim 1, further comprising:
a query engine executing the broadened query.

17. (Original) A system according to Claim 1, further comprising:
a graphical user interface interfacing the input module, the query broadening module, and the presentation module.

18. (Currently amended) A method for providing a user interface with search query broadening, comprising:

accepting a query defining a search executable on potentially retrievable information and parsing the query, wherein the query comprises a plurality of search characteristics;

logically grouping at least two of the search characteristics into a compound search characteristic;

determining at least one broadening search characteristic that corresponds to the compound search characteristic;

providing a broadened query that includes the at least one broadening search
characteristic; and

presenting at least one of the broadened query or ~~and~~ results of a search executed on the
broadened query.

19. (Original) A method according to Claim 18, further comprising:

providing the broadened query comprises determining a meaning for at least a portion of
the query.

20. (Original) A method according to Claim 19, further comprising:

providing the broadened query comprises determining a related concept based on the
meaning.

21. (Canceled)

22. (Original) A method according to Claim 18, further comprising:

performing at least one of modifying, replacing, supplementing, removing, or restating
the at least one search characteristic.

23. (Currently amended) A method according to Claim 18, further comprising:

selecting the at least one broadening search characteristic from a set of words having a
synonymous, alternate spelling, common root, or similar semantic meaning.

24. (Currently amended) A method according to Claim 18, further comprising:
selecting the at least one broadening search characteristic from a set of words having a related conceptual meaning.
- 25-27. (Canceled)
28. (Currently amended) A method according to Claim 18, further comprising:
presenting at least one of the search ~~characteristic~~ characteristics in the broadened query as a hyperlink; and
forming the broadened query comprising the at least one search characteristic responsive to a selection of the hyperlink.
29. (Original) A method according to Claim 28, further comprising:
displaying the broadened query as a static list responsive to a highlighting of the hyperlink.
30. (Original) A method according to Claim 28, further comprising:
presenting an option triggering selection of each such search characteristic in the broadened query as a hyperlink.
31. (Currently amended) A method according to Claim 18, further comprising:

presenting at least one ~~of the search characteristic~~ characteristics in the broadened query as at least one of a static list, a menu of selectable search characteristics, a set of checkboxes, or ~~and~~ a list of selectable search characteristics.

32. (Original) A method according to Claim 18, further comprising:

presenting an option triggering selection of each such search characteristic in the broadened query.

33. (Original) A method according to Claim 18, further comprising:

executing the broadened query.

34. (Original) A method according to Claim 18, further comprising:

providing a graphical user interface interfacing the input module, the query broadening module, and the presentation module.

35-36. (Canceled)

37. (New) A method, comprising:

receiving a search query comprising a plurality of search terms from a user, wherein the search query includes a user-selected operator associated with a first one of the search terms of the search query;

broadening the first one of the search terms based on the user-selected operator to
produce a broadened search query; and
executing a search using the broadened search query.

38. (New) The method of claim 37, wherein the search query further includes a user-selected
delimiter associated with a second one of the search terms that indicates that the second one of
the search terms should not be broadened.

39. (New) A method, comprising:
receiving a search query comprising a plurality of search terms;
broadening one of the plurality of search terms;
excluding the broadened one of the plurality of search terms from the search query;
executing a search based on the search query to provide search results; and
evaluating the search results relative to the excluded search term using categorical or
clustered distinctions.